



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**FLATTENING THE LEARNING CURVE:  
SOF AS THE SUPPORTED COMMAND IN  
THE IRREGULAR WARFARE ENVIRONMENT**

by

David J. O'Hearn  
Damon S. Robins  
Aaron C. Sessoms

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Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Anna Simons  
Gregory Wilson

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COMMAND IN THE IRREGULAR WARFARE ENVIRONMENT**

David J. O'Hearn  
Major, United States Army  
B.S., Northeastern State University, 1999

Damon S. Robins  
Major, United States Army  
B.S., Gardner-Webb University, 1996

Aaron C. Sessoms  
Major, United States Army  
B.A., The Citadel, 1999

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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**June 2012**

Author: David J. O'Hearn  
Damon S. Robins  
Aaron C. Sessoms

Approved by: Dr. Anna Simons  
Thesis Advisor  
  
Greg R. Wilson  
Second Reader  
  
Dr. John Arquilla  
Chair, Department of Defense Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

When the United States commits forces to a war, overseas contingency operations, or any other large-scale military effort that centers on conflict with belligerents other than another country's armed military forces, Special Operations Forces (SOF) should be the supported command. Joint doctrine allows for support of such a concept, but that doctrine has not always been followed in practice. Consequently, this thesis argues for SOF being the supported command in an irregular warfare environment. By selecting the force specifically trained for the task at hand, the United States will dramatically reduce the time lost on the "learning curve" that results from relying predominantly on General Purpose Forces (GPF) commanders in all combat situations. Advocating for SOF being the supported command is not an argument for SOF only, but rather aims for a synergistic and truly unified approach that makes the best possible use of local national forces, partner nations, *and* GPF in an irregular warfare environment.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAR	After Action Review
AO	Area of Operations
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AQ	Al-Qa'ida
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
BSO	Battlespace Owners
CA	Civil Affairs
CCC	Captain's Career Course
CDI	Community Defense Initiative
CENTCOM	Central Command
CF	Conventional Forces
CFSOCC-A	Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command –Afghanistan
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CJSOTF-A	Combined Joint Special Operations Forces–Afghanistan
CMO	Civil–Military Operations
COC	Chain of Command
COIN	Counter Insurgency
COMCJSOTF-A	Commander CJSOTF-A
COMIJC	Commander IJC
COMISAF	Commander ISAF
COMJTF	Commander JTF
COMUSFOR-A	Command USFOR-A
CT	Counter Terrorism
DA	Department of the Army
DCO	Deputy Commanding Officer

DoD	Department of Defense
DS	Direct Support
DSOP	Directorate of Special Operations Proponency
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FS	Force Sustainment
FY	Fiscal Year
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GPF	General Purpose Forces
GPFCC	General Purpose Forces Coordination Cell
GWOT	Global War of Terror
HQ	Headquarters
HRM	Human Resource Management
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IJC	ISAF Joint Command
IO	Information Operations
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
IW	Irregular Warfare
IWE	Irregular Warfare Environment
JFCOM	Joint Forces Command
JIWOFC	Joint Irregular Warfare Officer's Familiarization Course
JOA	Joint Operational Area
JOC	Joint Operating Concept
JP	Joint Publication
JPME	Joint Professional Military Education
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
JTF	Joint Task Force
LDI	Local Defense Initiative
LNO	Liaison

MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MCCC	Maneuver Captain's Career Course
MDMP	Military Decision Making Process
MEDCAPS	Medical Civic Action Programs
MFE	Maneuver Fires and Effects
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
MOE	Measure of Effectiveness
MOS	Military Occupation Specialty
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NCOES	Non-Commissioned Officer Education System
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NTM	National Training Mission
OCO	Overseas Contingency Operations
ONA	Office of Net Assessment
OODA	Observe Orient Decide Act
OPCON	Operational Control
OS	Operational Support
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PME	Professional Military Education
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RC	Regional Command
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
SC	Strategic Communication
SEAL	Sea Air Land (U.S. Navy Special Forces team member)
SF	Special Forces (U.S. Army Special Forces, "Green Berets")
SFAS	Special Forces Assessment and Selection
SFG(A)	Special Forces Group (Airborne)

SFODA	Special Forces Operational Detachment - Alpha
SFQC	Special Forces Qualification Course
SO	Special Operations
SOAF	Special Operations Academic Facility
SOCC	Special Operations Coordination Cell
SOCCENT	Special Operations Command Central
SOE	Special Operations Element
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force
SOTF-N	Special Operations Task Force—North
SSTRO	Security Stability Transition Reconstruction Operations
SWCCC	Special Warfare Captain's Career Course
TACON	Tactical Control
TF	Task Force
USAJFKSWCS	United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
USFOR-A	United States Forces—Afghanistan
USG	United States Government
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
USSOF	United States Special Operations Forces
UW	Unconventional Warfare
VSCC	Village Stability Coordination Center
VSO	Village Stability Operations
VSP	Village Stability Platform
VSTF	Village Stability Task Force
VSTF-N	Village Stability Task Force—North
WOES	Warrant Officer Education System
YG	Year Group

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*De Oppresso Liber*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. THESIS

This thesis argues that when the United States military commits forces to a war, Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), or any other large-scale military effort that centers on conflict with belligerents other than another country's armed military forces, Special Operations Forces (SOF) should be the supported command. Joint doctrine states that SOF can be the supported or supporting command.<sup>1</sup> This thesis will explain that in an Irregular Warfare (IW) environment, SOF should be the supported command. The definition of IW utilized in this thesis is engagement with "armed others," or belligerents that are not fighting as part of a uniformed state military/militia. This determination can be boiled down to the simple aphorism of "choosing the right tool for the job."

### B. EFFICIENCY

The U.S. conventional or General Purpose Forces (GPF) are arguably the most professional and lethal force ever created to face other professional military forces, and GPF commanders should be selected to lead during a conventional force-on-force conflict.<sup>2</sup> SOF will have a place in this type of warfare, but should serve as a supporting command to those GPF commanders. SOF forces train their entire career for IW, and just as GPF are the best at force-on-force engagement, SOF are the best at IW engagement with armed others. The same

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<sup>1</sup> JP 3-05. III-10, May 2011. "Given the SOF expertise and the special operations form of "maneuver," SOF may be best suited to lead U.S. forces in some operational areas. Accordingly, an optimal construct can be one having a SOF chain of command supported by CF and their enabling functions. Such a construct calls for a SOF JFC, not as a JFSOCC/CDRJSOTF, but as the CJTF.

<sup>2</sup> SOF 2030. MAJs Robins and Sessoms participated in a Long Term Strategy study with Dr. Anna Simons during the summer 2011 quarter. The topic for 2011's Long Term Strategy Seminar sponsored by the Office of Net Assessment was: SOF 2030 – what should decision makers be thinking about today in order to prepare SOF for 2030? 13 graduate students participated in the study (representing Naval Special Warfare, U.S. Army Special Forces, the Marine Corps, and the Air Force). With 82 total deployments since 9/11, participants tackled the SOF 2030 problem conceptually, bringing to bear tactical and operator-level experience. This thesis evolved from the Irregular Warfare portion of that study, and many ideas have been included in this document.

logic that leads to the determination that GPF commanders should lead in a force-on-force conflict also points to the determination that SOF commanders should lead in conflict with armed others. SOF commanders possess the knowledge and training to be successful in an IW conflict without the initial learning curve required of a GPF commander without this training and experience. Selecting a GPF commander to lead in an IW conflict is something akin to taking Bill Belichick away from the New England Patriots (whom he led to three Super Bowl wins), making him the manager of the New York Yankees, and then expecting him to lead them to the World Series in the same way: just because he is a future hall of fame football coach does not mean he has the knowledge or ability to manage a baseball team. Regardless of his leadership abilities, Belichick's learning curve would be too steep. Would it not make more sense to choose Bobby Cox, an already successful baseball coach and future baseball Hall of Famer, to lead the team? If sports franchises can get this right, then surely so could the United States military. The endstate should always be to become more effective and efficient in the ways in which we choose to prosecute conflicts, and therefore we should be effective, efficient, and smart about whom we select to command our forces in these conflicts.

### **C. TOP PRIORITY: DETERRENCE**

While U.S. policy makers and strategists have concluded that IW is the primary type of warfare we will prosecute for the foreseeable future, we still should not neglect our conventional prowess by converting GPF to "SOF-Like" IW-oriented forces, since conventional threats may once again become real, and should that happen, America would be left without the ability to sufficiently defend itself. As stated earlier, GPF are the most professional and lethal force on the planet. Arguably, this is exactly why the United States is not being directly threatened by others via conventional warfare. In a sense, the U.S. military has become a victim of its own success. Without a doubt, the Cold War and the

Revolution in Military Affairs have brought us to this point.<sup>3</sup> During the Cold War, we found ourselves deadlocked with the USSR because both sides possessed the most powerful weapons on the face of the earth. Mutually Assured Destruction kept both sides from using their nuclear arsenal, and a strategic policy known as Containment was fathered by George F. Kennan.<sup>4</sup> Our GPF capabilities are a modern deterrent against other nations that may consider using conventional military force against the United States and, for that reason alone, this capability should not be allowed to atrophy.

#### **D. EFFECTIVENESS**

While many contend that we just need more SOF to conduct IW more effectively, we disagree. Again, if we increase in size much beyond where we currently are, we will have reached a point of diminishing returns in which SOF become less effective. Some believe we are already there. In others words, we risk becoming watered down. If, instead, we clearly define in doctrine *when* SOF should be the supported command, the probability of success in IW increases, especially since, with GPF in support, SOF would have all the manpower it needs. Essentially, SOF could lead an IW campaign not only with and through indigenous forces, but in some cases with and through GPF units advised and assisted by SOF to conduct large-scale IW activities as a supporting command. GPF could serve as IW force multipliers, as they have recently been doing in places like the Arghandab in Afghanistan, where SOF and GPF have successfully integrated to conduct Village Stability Operations (VSO) with SOF in the lead.

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<sup>3</sup> The Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) was a concept developed by the militaries of the USSR, China, the U.S., the U.K., the Netherlands, etc. that led to the development and reliance upon technological and information advances to produce victory in conventional warfare. Mr. Andrew Marshall and the Office of Net Assessment at the Pentagon led the U.S. interest in the RMA. It was lauded as a success, and gained even more attention after the overwhelming, one-sided victory by the U.S. in the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq.

<sup>4</sup> Containment theory was a U.S. policy based upon several strategies to prevent the spread of communism during the Cold War. George F. Kennan is regarded as the father of containment theory, and most of the policy developed from his work. The Long Telegram and the "X" articles were the first, and most important, of many of writings that Kennan developed on containment theory.

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## II. IW DOCTRINE

### A. INTRODUCTION

Non-traditional ways of enforcing policy, via insurgency, Counter-Terrorism (CT), and Counter-Insurgency (COIN) are not new concepts. Yet, the concerted effort to consolidate their application under the umbrella of IW is a relatively recent development. Since the terrorist attacks in 2001, the traditional role of the military has shifted significantly. Combat forces now predominately face an enemy that does not wear clear distinctive insignia, or carry arms openly; and with the exception of the initial invasion in Iraq in 2003, the United States military has openly faced new challenges in full spectrum warfare. Irregular warfare as defined by joint doctrine is “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). ... to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will,” and requires indirect and asymmetric approaches.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, defining military problems within this context seemed to elude strategic decision makers prior to 2007, and likely resulted from poor policy administered at the national level. Lack of success forced a rethinking of doctrine and standards in order to meet the demands imposed by the unchanging environment.

### B. POLICY

Over the last decade, United States policies outlined in several national security documents identified the need for new approaches to warfare. In 2001, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), a legislatively mandated review of strategy, first addressed a growing number of asymmetric threats that confronted the United States.<sup>6</sup> However, this document did not address the need for a

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<sup>5</sup> Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, November 8, 2010), 175.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (2001), <http://www.dod.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf>.

comprehensive joint irregular warfare doctrine in the Global War on Terror, and likely caused the system to rely on an outdated institutional paradigm for solving new complex irregular problems.<sup>7</sup> Not until 2006, as a result of negative outcomes in Iraq, was the Department of Defense (DoD) forced to institutionalize the concept of IW in order to be successful.

### C. EXISTING IW DOCTRINE

In 2004, the growing insurgency in Iraq revitalized early SOF doctrine that addressed IW activities, such as COIN. Taking the lead, the United States Army revised and published new supporting materials, to include Field Manual 3-07.22 (*Counter-Insurgency Operations*), later to become FM 3-24. Following suit, political and military leaders acknowledged the need for the irregular application of conventional and unconventional means in the Global War on Terror, and emphasized three specific defense activities for the military: 1) defend the homeland, 2) prevail in the war on terror and conduct **irregular operations**, and 3) conduct and win conventional campaigns.<sup>8</sup> The military consequently turned to the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to draft a Joint Operating Concept (JOC) that would support an IW roadmap to success.<sup>9</sup> This roadmap emphasized that insurgency and counterinsurgency are at the core of IW, and that fourteen activities fall under its umbrella.<sup>10</sup> These activities are:

1. Insurgency<sup>11</sup>
2. Counter-Insurgency<sup>12</sup>
3. Unconventional Warfare (UW)<sup>13</sup>

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7 Ibid.

8 Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (2006): 36–39, [www.defense.gov/qdr/report/report20060203.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/qdr/report/report20060203.pdf).

9 Joint Warfighting Center, Irregular Warfare Special Study, (Norfolk: U.S. Joint Forces Command, August 4, 2006).

10 Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (2006).

11 Department of Defense, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, Joint Publication 3-24 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, October 5, 2009).

12 Ibid.

4. Terrorism<sup>14</sup>
5. Counter-Terrorism<sup>15</sup>
6. Foreign Internal Defense (FID)<sup>16</sup>
7. Security, Stability, Transition, Reconstruction Operations (SSTRO)<sup>17</sup>
8. Strategic Communication (SC)<sup>18</sup>
9. Psychological Operations (PSYOP)<sup>19</sup>
10. Information Operations (IO)<sup>20</sup>
11. Civil-Military Operations (CMO)<sup>21</sup>
12. Intelligence and Counterintelligence Activities<sup>22</sup>
13. Transnational Criminal Activities<sup>23</sup>
14. Law Enforcement Activities

Worth noting is that IW may require the employment of a full range of military capabilities, as evidenced by the preponderance of conventional forces in Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, prior to 2011, established military doctrine failed

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<sup>13</sup> Department of the Army, *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare*, Field Manual 3-05.130 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, September 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Department of Defense, *Joint Tactic, Techniques, and Procedures for Antiterrorism*, Joint Publication 3-07.2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, March 17, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Department of Defense, *Counterterrorism*, Joint Publication 3-26 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, November 13, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Department of Defense, *Foreign Internal Defense*, Joint Publication 3-22 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, July 12, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, *Department of Defense Directive 3000.05: Stability Operations*, (Washington, DC; U.S. Department of Defense, September 16, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Department of Defense, *Joint Operational Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, August 11, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Department of Defense, *Psychological Operations*, Joint Publication 3-13.2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, January 7, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Secretary of Defense Memo 12401-10: Information Operations*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense).

<sup>21</sup> Department of Defense, *Civil-Military Operations*, Joint Publication 3-57 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, July 8, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Intelligence*, Joint Publication 2-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, June 22, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> *Counterterrorism*, Joint Publication 3-26.

<sup>24</sup> *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02, 175.

to specifically address the potential friction that could arise between SOF and GPF in an IW environment (IWE). Differences in operational approaches (direct versus indirect) and command and control structures (tall versus flat) complicated the COIN effort. Thanks to the size of their forces, conventional commanders dominated the military landscape.

#### D. DOCTRINE REVISED

In December 2008, Department of Defense Directive 3000.07 finally directed that Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) and SOCOM develop a relevant joint IW doctrine, one that would recommend mechanisms for SOF and GPF interoperability and integration.<sup>25</sup> Joint Publication (JP) 3-05 (*Special Operations*) referenced by JP 3-0 (*Joint Operations*) as the guide for irregular activities — was revised in 2011 to address some of the SOF and GPF shortfalls. According to JP 3-05, in the current operational environment, “there may be cases where the C2 construct based on [the] preponderance of forces **may not** be the primary consideration in establishing the Joint Task Force (JTF). In some cases, a C2 construct based on Special Operations (SO) expertise and influence may be better suited to the overall conduct of an operation, with the JTF being built around a core SO staff.”<sup>26</sup> The document goes on to further say that, “an **optimal** construct can be one having a SOF chain of command supported by conventional forces (CF) and their enabling functions, [and] such a construct calls for a SOF JFC...as the CJTF.”<sup>27</sup> This thesis explores how to make such a construct work.

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<sup>25</sup> Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, *Department of Defense Directive 3000.07: Irregular Warfare*, (Washington, DC; U.S. Department of Defense, December 1, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Department of Defense, *Special Operations*, Joint Publication 3-05 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, April 18, 2011), III-10.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, III-10; emphasis is ours.

### III. EXISTING LITERATURE

#### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a review of the existing literature. We draw from military, active duty and retired, and civilian authors, many of whom have both SOF and GPF backgrounds. All have either been to or served in Afghanistan or Iraq at various levels of command, or will do so in the near future.

Numerous sources discuss SOF and GPF integration in IW and the importance of establishing unity of command and, more importantly, unity of effort. Only a small number, however, touch on identifying which should actually be the lead organization to command forces and establish the IW campaign strategy. We argue that this is the most critical factor, and getting it right will lead to the most effective and efficient means of prosecuting IW.

Most of the literature assumes that the overall COMJFC/JTF, in either a conventional or an irregular war, will be a conventional commander because conventional commanders doctrinally command more robust forces and historically have always assumed the COMJFC. But, this is too myopic a take on how to establish a command structure. Promoting the *right* commander with the *right* set of qualifications for the mission may be the better course of action. The literature details how the command and control relationships must be clarified and staffs must be incorporated early and often. But again, no mention is made of who should be in charge of which mission. This has led to dysfunction because, as JP 3-05 mentions, SOF may actually assume the role of COMCJTF and command all forces, particularly in the IWE.

#### B. MILITARY OFFICER RESEARCH

Military officers have been discussing the topic of SOF and GPF integration for some time and most, if not all, would agree that successful warfare requires both SOF and GPF contributions. The past 10 years have demonstrated the importance of integration and interoperability as SOF and GPF have been

sharing the same battlefield and even conducting some of the same missions. SOF recently added a fifth “Truth” to their lexicon to highlight the critical importance of working with GPF to accomplish the mission; SOF Truth #5 says that most special operations require non-SOF assistance.

MAJ Jeffrey Ortoli, a U.S. Army Officer and recent graduate from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, points out that although the Global War on Terror (GWOT) has blended the force, a “distinct cultural and operational rift has evolved between SOF and GPF.”<sup>28</sup> According to Ortoli, this rift creates challenges during military operations when synchronization and unity of effort are required.<sup>29</sup> He uses the Operation ANACONDA case study from early OEF to highlight the debacle of SOF and GPF integration efforts.<sup>30</sup> Ortoli makes a compelling argument for integration and interoperability at the tactical and operational levels for unity of effort purposes, but takes no distinct line on when SOF should be in the overall strategic lead.

Others argue that it may not be possible for the U.S. military to ever effectively and efficiently prosecute IW under the current organizational structure. Three U.S. Army officers (two SOF and one GPF), Majors Dave Painter, Mark Weaver, and Scott White, write in their combined thesis that the, “misunderstanding of IW and the improper organizational structure within the DoD has hindered its ability to succeed within IW environments.”<sup>31</sup> They argue, using organizational design theory, that DoD has only a small number of core organizations even within SOF that can properly conduct activities associated

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28 Jeffrey Ortoli, *Integration and Interoperability of Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces in Irregular Warfare* (Master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, December 2009), ii.

29 Other military thesis relating to the challenges of SOF-GPF integration is MAJ Michael Jackson, *AFSOF, Integration, and Joint Warfighting: Closing the Training Loop to Force Multiply and Succeed* (Master’s thesis, Joint Forces Staff College, June 2008).

30 Operation Anaconda was an early battle in OEF that sought to chase down and kill/capture AQ operatives to include the leader, Osama Bin Laden.

31 Dave Painter, Mark Weaver, and Scott White, *Reorganizing for Irregular Warfare* (Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2009), 5.

with IW.<sup>32</sup> These include U.S. Army Special Forces, Psychological Operations (now Military Information Support Operations), Civil Affairs, and the Marine Special Operations Advisory Group. According to Painter et al., these “must be unified under one headquarters outside of USSOCOM and supported by elements from across DoD.”<sup>33</sup>

Another thesis, written by now-LTCs Phil Mahla and Chris Riga, goes even further. They argue that SOF activities, including IW, are inherently misunderstood and sub-optimally executed by DoD. They advocate that all of SOF be transformed into a completely separate fifth service and given the same recognition and authority as the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. According to Mahla and Riga, this is the only way to ensure SOF is employed effectively and efficiently and IW activities are executed by the best organizational means available.<sup>34</sup>

Although creating an organization from scratch or carving out existing ones and combining them into a separate new organization may be optimal courses of action, we believe this is likely to be too difficult in an already resource constrained environment, and would require too dramatic a cultural shift for most senior leaders in DoD. Since GPF are likely to want and/or feel the need to play a major role in the IWE, particularly if this is the kind of warfare the U.S. military is most likely to wage for the foreseeable future, we believe that the current structure *can* work, but with SOF as the lead command.

COL Christopher Bado would agree. He explained over fifteen years ago in his 1996 thesis, “SOF is better suited to designing solutions to (IW) problems than GPF,” and subordinating SOF to GPF “may hinder the ability of the

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32 Regarding essential traits needed and who possesses them in order to conduct effective and efficient irregular warfare, see theses by Brad Burris, *ARSOF Professional Military Education for the Future* (Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2010) and Mike Mourouzis, *Finding Lawrence: Finding Talent for Unconventional Warfare* (Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2011).

33 Painter et al., *Reorganizing for Irregular Warfare*, 68.

34 Phil Mahla and Chris Riga, *An Operational Concept for the Transformation of SOF into a Fifth Service* (Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2003).

integrated force to design and implement an appropriate solution.”<sup>35</sup> Bado cites the errors made by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War when conventional-minded leaders in command of all forces under Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) completely absorbed and mismanaged one of the few successful IW activities, which was the SOF-created and SOF-executed Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program. According to Bado, MACV could not avoid focusing on an enemy-centric COIN strategy thanks to a conventional mindset. MACV wanted SOF to go after the enemy, and was not interested in SOF executing population-centric pacification programs. Bado concludes in his thesis that careful consideration must be given to the idea of GPF supporting SOF, “particularly at the strategic level of integration in operations that fall outside the conventional warfare area of the spectrum of conflict”- Irregular Warfare.<sup>36</sup>

IW, and more specifically COIN, consists of a myriad of tasks that are historically conducted by SOF and so do not need to be re-learned over and over again. However, because GPF have assumed many SOF tasks in recent years, to include advising host nation forces, they have had to (re)learn many of these lessons the hard way. COL Pat Roberson, Fellow at the School of Advanced Studies (SAMS), writes in his monograph that the U.S. Army (and the U.S. military for that matter) continually have to re-learn counterinsurgency principles. According to Roberson:

Interest by the Army in advising is cyclic. This interest coincides with U.S. involvement in large-scale counterinsurgencies. Concepts of advisory roles are generally forgotten after counterinsurgency campaigns and relearned, through discovery; at the beginning of the next large-scale counterinsurgency. This relearning phase can

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35 Chris Bado, *Integration of Special Operations and Conventional Forces in Unconventional Warfare* (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, March 1996), v.

36 Ibid, 9.

have disastrous results; therefore, understanding of advisory roles, through education and training, should be of paramount importance to the U.S. Army.<sup>37</sup>

Borrowing Roberson's argument that the relearning of ideas, "can have disastrous results," leads us to stress that choosing the right forces and right commanders for the job—forces and commanders that already have the capacity to conduct the mission and thus lead the mission—is essential.

### C. LEADING AUTHORS

Many books and articles have been written over the years that argue that the most effective and efficient organizational and command structure be utilized in IW. Mark Moyar, in his thought provoking book, *A Question of Command*, argues that U.S. strategy in COIN should be neither enemy nor population-centric, but rather leader-centric. He contends that if the right host nation military and political leaders are placed in power legitimately, and possess the right non-conventional qualities to wage a COIN war, they will be able to effectively develop the correct strategy for their nation.<sup>38</sup> CPT Sean Walsh, an ARSOF officer, further expands on Moyar's argument in his review of Moyar's book for *Special Warfare Magazine*:

While many of these attributes are common to effective leaders in all types of conflict, some characteristics, such as empathy, charisma and sociability, are unique to the counterinsurgency environment. Moyar writes that leaders who are successful in conventional conflicts sometimes lack the necessary psychological qualities to succeed as counterinsurgents. Moyar's analysis calls into question long-held views on how to identify and develop qualities essential for combat leaders.<sup>39</sup>

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37 Pat Roberson, "Understanding Advisory Roles in Large Scale Counterinsurgencies," (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, May 16, 2011), Abstract.

38 Mark Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009).

39 Sean Welsh, Book Review, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq* (*Special Warfare Magazine*, October-December 2011, vol. 24, no. 4): 42.

While there are now numerous competing claims about which centricity should take precedence in successful COIN, we mention Moyar because he does not simply focus on host nation leaders, but also on those who are advising and assisting them. SOF officers are specially recruited, selected, and trained for IW, and therefore possess the critical qualities Moyar and many others cite as keys to success in the IWE.<sup>40</sup>

In her monograph *Got Vision? Unity of Vision in Policy and Strategy: What It Is, and Why We Need It*, Anna Simons argues that unconventional (or irregular) thinking is inherent in certain individuals and does not need to be taught. In her words, individuals either have that way of thinking or they do not, and generals chosen to lead in the IWE must be of the unconventional mindset. Simons explains:

We need individuals who see the forest *and* the trees, do not have to be taught to think in terms of branches and sequels, and do not need to be prodded by doctrine (or a President) to consider what the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> order of effects of an action might be.<sup>41</sup>

She contends that if the military would assess, select, reassess, and deselect to choose the right person to conduct IW, then the “what” or the “how” would become irrelevant.<sup>42</sup> Since U.S. SOF are uniquely designed to identify such individuals, it seems they should be granted the lead in the IWE. Thus far, however, they have not been.

Sean Naylor describes in detail the events surrounding Operation ANACONDA from planning to execution, in order to show how SOF and GPF were at odds over how to conduct the operation and, more specifically, over who should command the effort. Naylor explains that many, mostly SOF, participants, asked at the time why a conventional general was placed in charge of an

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40 Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq*.

41 Anna Simons, “Got Vision? Unity of Vision in Policy and Strategy: What It Is, and Why We Need It,” [StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubid=998) (July 20, 2010), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubid=998> (accessed December 5, 2011): 1.

42 Ibid, v.

irregular war; they were referring to MG Frank Hagenbeck, the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Commander. According to Naylor, the rationale was that COL John Mulholland, who led TF Dagger, would be unable to effectively command and control the total forces involved. But, Naylor implies that this was more a consequence of conventional generals wanting to get into the fight. After all, Mulholland could have been elevated to Brigadier General and left in command quite easily.<sup>43</sup>

Hy Rothstein, a retired Special Forces officer, also cites Operation ANACONDA as a critical turning point in the Afghanistan War. In his 2004 doctoral thesis, *A Tale of Two Wars—Why the U.S. Cannot Conduct Unconventional Warfare*,<sup>44</sup> Rothstein argues that if SOF had been placed in charge from the beginning of Operation ANACONDA, its assessment of the situation that the war was not conventional, but unconventional, and thereby required an unconventional strategy, would have led to a different campaign strategy and a potentially favorable outcome. Applying Edward Luttwak's attrition-maneuver warfare continuum to IW, Rothstein notes that GPF understand and operate best as an attrition-based organization and, "possess a 'DNA' that can only produce," a conventional solution. Therefore, according to Rothstein, subordinating SOF to GPF was a critical error that kept the United States from developing successful campaign strategies in Afghanistan.<sup>45</sup>

Given all of these arguments for why SOF should take the lead in the IWE, it is only fair to point out that others argue that even had SOF wanted to do this in Afghanistan, it lacks the structural capability and has an insufficient number of flag officers to command. In response, we would offer that JP3–05 addresses

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43 Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (Berkley Publishing Group: New York, 2005).

44 The thesis laid the foundation for Rothstein's book, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006).

45 Hy Rothstein, *A Tale of Two Wars – Why the U.S. Cannot Conduct Unconventional Warfare* (Doctoral Thesis, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, April 2004), 134–143.

this, and identifies organizational constructs SOF does possess to meet this need. Journalist Linda Robinson, for instance, has described how TSOC Commanders, who are flag officers, are able to command large forces across all spectrums of warfare. Indeed, as she points out, General Stanley McChrystal was the first SOF flag officer placed in command of all forces, to include SOF and GPF, in Afghanistan. As his appointment proves, SOF flag officers are more than capable.<sup>46-47</sup>

#### **D. DOD STUDIES**

In 2008, the Joint Forces Command's Joint Warfighting Center published a study entitled *Special Operations and Conventional Forces Integration*, which sought to address, "insights and best practices in achieving synergy between conventional forces (GPF) and SOF co-located on the irregular warfare battlefield." In it, retired officers GEN Gary Luck and COL Mike Findlay focus on, "integration considerations in those cases where a JTF is formed and SOF is working within the JTF's Joint Operations Area (JOA)." The paper lays out a detailed analysis of the appropriate command relationships needed and integration insights for each of the levels of war in IW.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Linda Robinson, "Inside the 'New' Special Operations Forces," USNI.org (July 2009), <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2009-07/inside-new-special-operations-forces> (accessed October 31, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> Although SOF had been in command throughout the Afghanistan War, there is no guarantee that the war would have been more successful. SOF does not have a lock on unconventional approaches to military problems and in times past conventional commanders and soldiers have been successful in the IWE. Our thesis is attempting to bridge the gap between SOF and GPF and not tear it down. To reiterate, we desire to demonstrate that SOF and GPF are experts in their particular field identified in practice and doctrine and therefore should be placed in command of their particular mission sets. We would also note that for anyone who thinks otherwise, General Stanley McChrystal's resignation cannot be viewed as any sort of judgment on his capabilities, particularly since the Rolling Stone article was repudiated by the U.S. Army and DoD.

<sup>48</sup> Gary Luck and Mike Findlay, *Insights and Best Practices: Special Operations and Conventional Force Integration, Focus Paper #5* (Suffolk, VA: Joint Warfighting Center, October 2008), preface.

Luck and Findlay's study seeks to foster a "one team, one fight" concept for SOF and GPF on the IW battlefield.<sup>49</sup> Like them, we believe that unity of effort and integration must be priority number one. However, we would submit that their study is lopsided because it assumes that the person at the helm of the JTF will always be a GPF commander who needs to learn and understand how to integrate and employ the SOF working within his JOA. But—what if the COMJTF was a SOF flag officer, and *already* knew how to employ SOF in IW? Ironically, one need for a study such as Luck and Findlay's grows out of the issues that arise when SOF are subordinated to GPF in an IWE. Tellingly, on the conventional battlefield, issues between SOF and GPF are few and far between, because SOF generally understand they are in the supporting role.

In the spring of 2011, the Office of Net Assessment (ONA) sponsored a 10-week long study to engage Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) students to think about what SOF should look like in the year 2030. The group included field-grade officers from all of the services, to include SOF and GPF. Although the group did not achieve consensus on all parts of the study, officers did agree that SOF should lead in the IWE, given SOF selection, training, and experience. Citing JP 3–05, which makes clear that SOF can be a supported *or* supporting command, the SOF 2030 study argued that doctrine should identify under which circumstances SOF should be either the supported or supporting command. According to the SOF 2030 study, when the United States needs to wage conventional warfare, GPF should be the supported command, and when the United States is in an irregular fight, SOF should be the supported command.<sup>50</sup>

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49 Luck and Findlay, *Insights and Best Practices: Special Operations and Conventional Force Integration, Focus Paper #5*, 1.

50 Simons et al., "SOF 2030," Long Term Strategy Seminar conducted by the Department of Defense Analysis NPS (Spring 2011) and sponsored by the ONA.

## E. CASE STUDY

In our quest to examine whether or not SOF should be the lead command in IW, we focused heavily on the work being done on a daily basis by SOF and GPF while executing Village Stability Operations (VSO) in Afghanistan. Especially fascinating is how fully integrated at all levels units are *with* SOF as the lead command. The Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) currently commands all forces in Afghanistan conducting VSO, to include organic SOF units and two U.S. Army infantry battalions. SOF, as the IW experts, are conducting VSO *with and through* GPF to accomplish the main COIN effort in Afghanistan. This is a first. Never before has a complete, battalion-sized GPF unit been fully integrated down to the squad level with SOF to conduct the same mission. The feedback from participants is quite favorable, which could well make this program a model for future SOF and GPF total force integration in IW and the IWE.

There are numerous documents available that describe the VSO program. Probably the most important is the CJSOTF-A manual entitled *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police Bottom-Up Counterinsurgency*, commonly referred to as the VSO Handbook.<sup>51</sup> Other insightful accounts include contributions to *Special Warfare* magazine, which has thus far published three articles summarizing the ongoing VSO effort.<sup>52</sup> Another article worth pointing to is that of Dan Madden. Madden is a Rand Corporation analyst working for Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A); in it he provides a detailed history of the “evolution” of VSO.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> COL Don Bolduc, HQ CJSOTF-A, “Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police: Bottom-Up Counterinsurgency,” (April 1, 2011).

<sup>52</sup> *Special Warfare Magazine (SWM)*, July-September 2011, vol. 24, no. 3: 22–34.

<sup>53</sup> Dan Madden, Rand Corporation, CFSOCC-A CIG, “The Evolution of Precision Counterinsurgency: A History of Village Stability Operations & the Afghan Local Police,” (June 30, 2011).

In addition, there are After Action Reviews (AARs) and lessons learned documents composed by the units conducting VSO. We draw on all of these, though there are no accounts that specifically focus on the importance of total SOF and GPF integration in IW, and the effects that are being achieved by having SOF as the lead command. Our case study in Chapter III and analysis in Chapter IV are intended to serve as an initial account. Important to note is that it is not our intent to lay out the VSO program in detail. Instead, our aim is to examine the integration effort between SOF and GPF to highlight how this could serve as a model for future IW endeavors. For a comprehensive understanding of the VSO program, see the aforementioned references.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Other important references regarding VSO include (borrowed from Ty Connett and Bob Cassidy, “VSO: More Than Village Defense,” *SWM*, July-September 2011): Seth G. Jones, “It Takes Villages: Bringing Change From Below in Afghanistan,” *Foreign Affairs*, May-June 2010; General David H. Petraeus, conference remarks, *CFSOCC-A Village Stability/Afghan Local Police Conference*, April 9, 2011; Frederick W. Kagan, “Defining Success in Afghanistan,” American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War, 2011; and Peter Bergen, “Why Afghanistan Is Far From Hopeless,” *Time*, 17 March 2011. Also essential reads are Rory Hanlin’s, “One Teams Approach to Village Stability Operations,” *Small Wars Journal*, September 4, 2011, and Joseph A. L’Etoile’s, “Transforming the Conflict in Afghanistan,” *Prism*, September 2011.

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## IV. OEF/VSO CASE STUDY

### A. EARLIER STRATEGY

In the fall of 2001, Coalition forces, with the United States in the lead, went to Afghanistan for one primary reason: kill/capture Osama Bin Laden. The secondary objective was to utilize U.S. Army Special Forces working by, with, and through the Northern Alliance in conjunction with U.S. airpower to oust the Taliban regime. The objectives were clear to the U.S. military and the strategy adopted, in today's vernacular, was purely enemy-centric.<sup>55</sup> Measures of effectiveness (MOE) for achieving the objectives were easily definable early on as SOF sought to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat the Al-Qa'ida (AQ) network and topple the Taliban regime. However, as time went on and the United States shifted its focus from Afghanistan to Iraq, the Taliban insurgency re-emerged and began to win some popular support amongst the Afghan people. This caused the Coalition, now completely led by conventional generals, to ramp up its efforts to find, fix, and finish the Taliban insurgents. Unfortunately, however, the Coalition's efforts came at the expense of the same people the Coalition was supposed to free from oppression: the Afghan population. Because the Coalition was unsuccessful in its primary objective, kill/capture Osama Bin Laden, one could argue that the Coalition never completely shifted its strategy from an enemy-centric focus to a population-centric focus once the environment shifted to a COIN fight. Richard Daft, author of *Essentials of Organizational Theory and Design*, explains that organizations are effective to "the degree to which an organization realizes its goals."<sup>56</sup> Given the Coalition's failure to achieve its

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<sup>55</sup> Enemy-centric COIN focuses on attrition warfare where number of killed/captured enemy is the measure used to determine whether your force is winning.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Daft, *Essentials of Organizational Theory and Design* (South-Western Thomson Learning: New Hampshire, 2003), 24.

primary goal, we will take a further look into Daft's idea of effectiveness to see whether it helps explain how ill-suited the Coalition's chosen approach was for the COIN mission.<sup>57</sup>

### 1. Goal Approach

In any organization, it is difficult to measure effectiveness; a military organization is no exception. A vast amount of research, data, and analysis has been devoted to trying to identify adequate, let alone optimal, MOEs over the past 9 years of IW in Afghanistan. Daft contends that utilizing contingency approaches—e.g., goal, resource-based, internal process, or stakeholder—can help organizations measure effectiveness by focusing on separate parts of the organization. According to Daft, the goal approach is, "concerned with the output side and whether the organization achieves its goals in terms of desired levels of output."<sup>58</sup> An enemy-centric strategy can be said to measure effectiveness using this approach because outputs, such as killed or captured insurgents, are relatively easily measured. Unfortunately, this can also trap commanders into always viewing these as measures of success, when in fact they may not be. For instance, in Vietnam, when U.S. to North Vietnamese Army and/or Vietcong exchange ratios reached 1:10 (excludes ARVN losses), U.S. generals saw a path to victory by adding hundreds of thousands of more American troops, not taking into account the likelihood that the enemy could and would replenish its ranks indefinitely.

Prior to April 2009 the Coalition fell into just such a trap of associating high numbers of outputs with indications that objectives were being met or even exceeded when, in fact, the insurgency was gaining strength. Interestingly, even non-kinetic outputs traditionally thought to bolster popular support, such as cache recoveries, Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAPS), and the building of wells, schools, and hospitals, were at times having little to no effect because

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57 Coalition is used initially to set the stage, but the unit of analysis is still CJSOTF-A and they are a sample of the Coalition as a whole as the actions of the CJSOTF-A nest with ISAF.

58 Daft, *Essentials of Organizational Theory and Design*, 25.

commanders were confusing “doing stuff” with being effective. In other words, while leaders thought strategic goals were being met, the “white space”<sup>59</sup> on the map was increasingly being darkened by the insurgency. White space includes not just actual land and population, but the total human terrain within Afghanistan, to include the government and security forces. To be comprehensive we have to include the U.S. and international community as well, since multiple regional and supraregional players have a stake in the outcomes of the war.<sup>60</sup>

Because the COIN mission is complex, and the environment is predominately unstable, a simple goal-oriented approach hardly seems appropriate. Instead, a stakeholder approach offers the better match, especially since a population-centric strategy requires forces to take into account all the various actors and better integrate, or mitigate, their different and competing activities.

## **2. Stakeholder Approach**

According to Daft, a stakeholder “is any group within or outside an organization that has a stake in the organization’s performance.”<sup>61</sup> As mentioned previously, there are many entities that have a vested interest in the future success of Afghanistan. Below is a list of the most important stakeholders:

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59 White space is the area surrounding a village that is inhospitable to insurgents. It has become the new measure of effectiveness (MOE) in the COIN campaign in Afghanistan. As security and stability increase in an area the “white space” expands and insurgents have difficulty operating and therefore are forced to relocate.

60 For an interesting and comprehensive look into the regional politics surrounding Afghanistan with respect to the ongoing insurgency, read Zahid Mann’s June 2010 Naval Postgraduate School master’s thesis entitled, *The Nature of Insurgency in Afghanistan and the Regional Power Politics*.

61 Daft, *Essentials of Organizational Theory and Design*, 27.

STAKEHOLDER	EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA
Afghan Population (Critical)	Inhospitable to insurgents
Afghan Government	Providing essential services and economic prosperity
Afghan Security Forces	Providing security
U.S. Population	Support for USG/Mil objectives
U.S. Government (includes Military)	Afghans standing up for Afghans
International Community/Regional Players (Pakistan, Iran, India, China and Russia) <sup>62</sup>	Varies; return on investment
Non-Governmental Organizations	Low collateral damage/human rights

Table 1. Effectiveness Criteria

Each stakeholder has a different set of MOEs that may either complement or conflict with others' MOEs. The strength of the stakeholder approach, according to Daft, is that it provides a, "broad view of effectiveness and examines factors in the environment as well as within the organization." As Daft further explains, "The stakeholder approach includes the community's notion of social responsibility, which is not formally measured in the goal...approach."<sup>63</sup> To apply the stakeholder approach to Afghanistan would reveal that the Afghan population had no vested interest in the fighting between the coalition and the insurgents because the population had neither the will nor the power to have any effect on either. Coalition forces, to include the Afghan government, were not truly partnering with the population. Nor were they providing effective security or

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<sup>62</sup> Zahid Mann, *The Nature of Insurgency in Afghanistan and the Regional Power Politics*. (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2010).

<sup>63</sup> Daft, *Essentials of Organizational Theory and Design*, 28. Social responsibility is exactly what VSO is attempting to spark in the Afghan population. The term "Afghans standing up for Afghans" is an unofficial motto of the VSO program.

governance. The bottom line is that effectiveness is complex, multidimensional, and must integrate all stakeholders. Or, to really cut to the chase, there can be no single MOE in COIN.

## **B. STRATEGIC SHIFT (BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT)**

In July of 2009, GEN Stanley McChrystal assumed command of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and United States Forces in Afghanistan (USFOR-A).<sup>64</sup> This marked the first time a SOF flag officer assumed command of all forces in Afghanistan since the war in Afghanistan began in 2002. Until GEN McChrystal's appointment, GPF generals had been in charge of a complex and unstable irregular war that had not, to this point, been won by conventional means.

GEN McChrystal arrived when the mission in Iraq was enjoying new-found success and was in the process of drawing down, while Afghanistan's Taliban insurgency was ramping up and growing increasingly stronger. Fresh from successes in Iraq, the newly minted Commander of ISAF (COMISAF) brought a new perspective and campaign strategy to a dull and failing COIN mission.

### **1. Population Versus Enemy-Centric Strategy**

GEN McChrystal's first and most important order of business was to shift the focus from an enemy-centric to a population-centric mindset. The Coalition understood, somewhat that it was important to focus on winning the population's hearts and minds, but mainly considered this a secondary objective. The very narrow (short-term) direct focus was on finding and killing the enemy. There was no real emphasis placed on influencing and strengthening the local populace to stand up for themselves over the long term. A more doctrinally sound IW approach was therefore warranted. Consequently, GEN McChrystal advocated massive restraint, acknowledging in his Congressional testimony that "it was

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<sup>64</sup> GEN McChrystal recently relinquished command of the elite Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) which was instrumental in waging war on Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and was responsible for overseeing the killing or capture of AQI's highest leaders. He implemented a network style system to match that of AQI and insurgent groups.

more important to protect civilians than to kill insurgents.”<sup>65</sup> Many arguments would erupt during the following months over whether his soft-power strategy was exposing ISAF and U.S. forces to undue risk. But hardcore COIN supporters cheered the commander for bringing the force more in line with U.S. COIN doctrine.<sup>66</sup>

## **2. Unity of Effort**

In order to execute the new population-centric COIN strategy, GEN McChrystal needed to re-organize the force to better develop unity of command for the purpose of achieving unity of effort.<sup>67</sup> Unity of effort ensures that all organizations involved, to include U.S. and coalition forces, strive to accomplish the same strategic end state. To support this initiative, GEN McChrystal created the ISAF Joint Command (IJC), a 3-star Headquarters (HQ) to unify control of the six separate Regional Commands (RCs). In addition to the IJC, all subordinate RC HQs were re-designated as Division-level HQs in command of all forces in their respective Areas of Responsibility (AOR).<sup>68</sup> Lastly, SOF were reorganized to layer and support GEN McChrystal’s overall strategic plan. No longer were organizations to work independently in stovepipes or in a vacuum. Instead, the mission was going to require mutual trust and, at times, full integration to achieve strategic success.

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<sup>65</sup> Michael Cohen, “Tossing the Afghan COIN,” <http://www.thenation.com/article/157154/tossing-afghan-coin> (December 16, 2010), accessed September 10, 2011.

<sup>66</sup> FM 3-24, “COIN is an extremely complex form of warfare. At its core, COIN is a struggle for the population’s support. The protection, welfare, and support of the people are vital to success.”

<sup>67</sup> FM 3-24, “Unity of command is the preferred doctrinal method for achieving unity of effort by military forces. Where possible, COIN leaders achieve unity of command by establishing and maintaining the formal commander support relationships... Unity of command should extend to all military forces supporting a host nation. The ultimate objective of these arrangements is for military forces, police, and other security forces to establish effective control while attaining a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within the society. Command and control of all U.S. Government organizations engaged in a COIN mission should be exercised by a single leader through a formal command and control system.”

<sup>68</sup> Bolduc, “Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police: Bottom-Up Counterinsurgency,” 3.

### **3. Special Operations Forces Supporting Plan**

The CFSOCC-A was established in January 2009 to better coordinate future SOF activities across Afghanistan prior to GEN McChrystal's tenure and adoption of his population-centric strategy. CFSOCC-A would support COMISAF's strategic goals and, in July 2009 begin to support the COMIJC's operational goals for COIN objectives. During this timeframe, the CJSOTF-A became the tactical HQ to execute CFSOCC-A's new campaign, initially referred to as Community Defense Initiative (CDI)/Local Defense Initiative (LDI), now called Village Stability Operations. VSO became the primary tool and main effort of COMISAF's population-centric strategy, and still is today under current COMISAF GEN John Allen.<sup>69</sup> This means, for all intents and purposes, SOF has become the lead element in the Afghanistan War with the CJSOTF-A at the "tip of the spear."<sup>70</sup>

### **C. SOF/GPF INTEGRATION IN BOTTOM-UP COIN STRATEGY**

In April 2010, SOF command authorities changed drastically for the first time since 2002.<sup>71</sup> Operational Control (OPCON)<sup>72</sup> of CFSOCC-A was changed from Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) to USFOR-A, the organization under which all USGPF forces were aligned. This change gave the

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<sup>69</sup> Village Stability Operations are a range of planned activities designed to stabilize a village and connect it to formal governance at the district and provincial levels by facilitating infrastructure development. Stability comes from a bottom-up, grass-roots mobilization of Afghans that establishes and maintains security, development, and governance in a rural environment. Two outward signs of stability are an absence of violence and disorder and a return to traditional local governance through the shura. SOF with GPF, both U.S. and Afghan, lives in and among the villages in order to partner with the local people and demonstrate their resolve to protect and provide for the populace.

<sup>70</sup> SOF was the primary element and therefore the lead element during the opening events of OEF on 7 October 2001, but as mentioned previously, became the supporting element during Operation Anaconda in Spring 2002.

<sup>71</sup> MG Frank Hagenbeck assumed command of all tactical forces in the eve of Operation Anaconda. This was the first time a conventional general was given direct tactical command of SOF, along with GPF. TF Dagger led by COL John Mulholland and TF Rakkasan led by COL Frank Wiercinski, along with OCF were now to report directly to MG Hagenbeck.

<sup>72</sup> Joint Publication 1.02, states that OPCON "normally provides full authority to organize commands and forces and to employ those forces as the commander in operational control considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions."

COMUSFOR-A more authorities to put toward optimal unity of effort. Also, CJSOTF-A, commanded by CFSOCC-A, was put in Direct Support (DS)<sup>73</sup> of COMIJC, and the subordinate Special Operations Task Forces (SOTF)/Village Stability Task Forces (VSTF) were put in DS to their respective RCs.<sup>74</sup>

The aim in creating these DS relationships was for CJSOTF-A units to conduct a bottom-up COIN strategy nested with the RC's plans, and thus achieve unity of effort. Although a critical command relationship had to be changed for accountability purposes, to ensure proper command and control, resourcing, and employment of SOF, all SOF "retained a separate SOF chain of command (COC)."<sup>75</sup>

Once CJSOTF-A began planning and executing VSO and showing signs of success, DoD determined a requirement for more SOF in order to expand the promising COIN program to additional sites across Afghanistan. However, because the CJSOTF-A troop-to-task ratio was saturated, more SOF simply did not exist. COL Don Bolduc, the COMCJSOTF-A, was faced with the prospect of not being able to exploit VSO successes, and therefore sought a different course of action; he needed a plan that could provide more forces to fill the gap. Even additional SEAL teams and MARSOC detachments that were tasked to the CJSOTF-A did not begin to meet the need generated by the potential for VSO expansion. Instead, COL Bolduc devised a plan to leverage the very experienced combat forces already available in the U.S. arsenal—namely, GPF in the form of U.S. Infantry. The conventional military had been engaged in two

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<sup>73</sup> Joint Publication 1.02, states DS is for a "mission requiring a force to support another specific force and authorizing it to answer directly to the supported force's request for assistance."

<sup>74</sup> Don Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan," *Special Warfare Magazine*, October-December 2011, Volume 24, Issue 4, 24.

<sup>75</sup> Don Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan," *Special Warfare Magazine*, October-December 2011, Volume 24, Issue 4, 24.

COIN wars for the past 9 years and had numerous units capable of conducting VSO under the mentorship and advice of SOF partners.<sup>76</sup>

In November 2010 the plan to provide increased VSO capacity was agreed upon at the highest levels. GEN Petraeus, the new COMISAF/USFOR-A, requested and was granted approval for an infantry battalion to be placed under OPCON of CFSOCC-A and Tactical Control (TACON)<sup>77</sup> of CJSOTF-A. This battalion was tasked and subsequently deployed in January 2011. GEN Petraeus then saw fit to assign an additional Infantry battalion to be deployed in July 2011. The original infantry battalion (1–16 IN, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division) was divided into platoon and squad-sized elements to be integrated with the various SOF teams, thus becoming a “thickening” force to increase capacity. The battalion headquarters became what is known as Village Stability Coordination Center (VSCC)—North, and was responsible for, “coordinating national and provincial level development and governance resources and actors in support of VSO” in RC-North, where its units were operating.<sup>78</sup> With the injection of GPF and this increased capacity, the CJSOTF-A by March 2011, had almost doubled its personnel strength from 2,900 to 5,400 and expanded from 5 to 46 VSO sites across Afghanistan.<sup>79</sup>

When the second infantry battalion (1–505<sup>th</sup> IN, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division) deployed, it was given increased responsibility to serve as

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76 “Village Stability Operations are not a SOF-specific mission. With proper training, mentorship, and task organization, General Purpose Forces (GPF) are fully capable of conducting bottom-up COIN in Afghanistan...To maintain pace at the speed of the populace and insurgency, USSOF and GPF collaboration is essential for a successful bottom-up COIN strategy.” VSO and ALP Handbook.

77 Joint Publication 1.02, defines TACON as having “Command authority over assigned or attached forces or commands, or military capability or forces made available for tasking, that is limited to the detailed and, usually, local direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned. Tactical control is inherent in operational control.”

78 Madden, “The Evolution of Precision Counterinsurgency: A History of Village Stability Operations & the Afghan Local Police,” 8, 10.

79 Bolduc, “Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan,” 27.

the Village Stability Task Force – North (VSTF-N),<sup>80</sup> and given total responsibility, to include commanding all GPF and SOF conducting VSO in RC-North. Later, TF-1 Panther, the task forces new name, was designated Special Operations Task Force–North (SOTF-N), essentially because no SOTF existed in RC-North (in contrast to the other five RCs). This marked another unprecedented act of integration. The first unprecedeted act of integration was the initial assignment of a GPF battalion to a JSOTF for total integration. The second was a GPF unit being given responsibility to oversee and function as a special operations unit. Also important to note is that the GPF units were not simply parceled out to various SOF units, but the GPF commander remained fully in charge of his organic forces. It was critical to COMCJSOTF-A that the GPF infantry battalion commander, along with his staff, be allowed to function as an organic unit, albeit with SOF augmentation.<sup>81</sup>

In order for the infantry battalion to become completely integrated and interoperable with SOF and able to effectively plan and execute bottom-up COIN within the scope of VSO, COL Bolduc first embedded SOF NCOs and officers to serve in key staff billets as mentors and advisors. This included his Deputy Commander (DCO), senior operations NCOs, operations and logistical planners, and SOF communications operators. Next, he assigned to TF-1 Panther a complete U.S. Army Special Forces company with additional SEAL platoons and combat support as the principal elements conducting VSO. Led by a U.S. Army Special Forces Major, the company was organized and operated as an Advanced Operating Base (AOB),<sup>82</sup> and absorbed the infantry battalion's

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80 Madden, "The Evolution of Precision Counterinsurgency: A History of Village Stability Operations & the Afghan Local Police," 8.

81 Meeting with COL Don Bolduc, former COMCJSOTF-A, July 27, 2011, DDSO, Pentagon, Washington, DC.

82 AOB is the designator given to a U.S. Army Special Forces company when deployed conducting operations and given additional support elements to include other SOF and GPF.

platoons and squads, integrating them within each of the SOF teams. The idea was to facilitate complete integration at all levels and maximize the chances for success.<sup>83</sup>

#### **D. VILLAGE STABILITY PLATFORM**

The element that actually executes VSO in the village is referred to as a Village Stability Platform (VSP), which is the level at which the GPF squad/platoon was mentored and advised by the SOF team. More colloquially, the term *Yawzai*, meaning “together” in Pashto, was given to the initial SOF-GPF effort in RC-South:

The *Yawzai* element is comprised of a task organized infantry squad with additional enablers designed to replicate some of the core VSO functions of a U.S. Special Forces split-team VSP that is —partnered with a USSOF team conducting VSO within the BSO’s [Battlespace Owners] AO. This element consists of an Infantry Platoon Leader, Squad Leader, HUMINT collection and analysis enablers, training manager, and development project managers.<sup>84</sup>

The aim of the *Yawzai* elements in the village was to not only increase capacity, but ensure that eventually GPF would be able to work unilaterally once they were deemed ready by their SOF advisors.

#### **E. UNCERTAINTY**

Other factors, such as a corrupt Afghan regime and/or powerful external actors, may in fact prevent VSO from obtaining the strategic effects so desired by ISAF. The future is very uncertain, and whether or not VSO is the catalyst to bring about victory in Afghanistan remains unknown. Nevertheless, SOF have shown what is possible when they are chosen to command in the IWE, suggesting they should have been all along.

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83 Meeting with COL Don Bolduc, former COMCJSOTF-A, July 27, 2011, DDSO, Pentagon, Washington, DC.

84 Bolduc, “Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police: Bottom-Up Counterinsurgency,” 75.

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## V. ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

The recent formalization of an integrated SOF-GPF organizational structure in Afghanistan via the VSO program presupposes that adaptation of a new organizational design was needed to meet IWE requirements. Analyzing the existing structure according to basic organizational design concepts should help better explain this hybrid program's effectiveness for COIN.

### A. ENVIRONMENT

The environment, which defines an organization's domain or boundaries, must be examined to understand the influence it has, specifically on an organization's configuration and behavior.<sup>85</sup> The two primary mechanisms of influence generated by the environment are information and resources.<sup>86</sup> At every level (strategic, operational, and tactical) the environment can become uncertain when conducting IW operations, which consist of fourteen different but nonetheless overlapping activities.<sup>87</sup> These tasks, varying in difficulty from the simple to the complex, require an acute understanding of all environmental factors in order for adaptation to succeed.

In IW, an organization will interact with eight environmental influences, commonly referred to as determinates of national power: geography, population, resources, and economic, military, informational, psychological, and political factors.<sup>88</sup> These directly impact the organization's ability to achieve its goals.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Erik Jansen, "The Environment and its affect on Organizations," presented at Naval Postgraduate School. First developed by Jay W. Lorsh in 1975.

<sup>86</sup> Richard L. Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design* (New Hampshire, South-Western Thomson Learning, 2003), 48.

<sup>87</sup> According to the IW Joint Operating Concept developed by the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) in 2007 fourteen activities were identified that comprise IW. The core of these activities is insurgency and counterinsurgency. U.S. Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept: Version 1.0*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, September 11, 2007), 10.

<sup>88</sup> Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept: Version 1.0*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, September 11, 2007), 10.

The organization must monitor and transact with the external environment to import materials, energy, or information (e.g., inputs) for its use.<sup>90</sup> The system then transforms these inputs into a product or service (e.g., output) that is exported back into the environment to achieve the organization's desired effects.<sup>91</sup> Forces conducting COIN in Afghanistan, for instance, require large quantities of information given the complex and interrelated nature of countering insurgents, while information is also required to assist with governance, security, essential services, etc. Additionally, large quantities of resources are required to support the political and military objectives of both national and international organizations. These inputs, to include manpower, equipment, and money, must then be transformed by the organization into a product that meets the needs of its stakeholders: the U.S. government (USG), Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA), Afghan populace, and members of the international community. Meanwhile, the processes by which information and resources are transformed are directly influenced by the strategy and vision provided by the organization's leadership; these provide the starting point for the organization's structure and design.

## B. ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

Currently, the organization of U.S. forces in Afghanistan resembles a matrix-like structure, a significant shift from the functionally structured construct

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<sup>89</sup> When the parts of an organization interact with environmental segments this is known as the organization's task environment. Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*.

<sup>90</sup> Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 48–54.

<sup>91</sup> Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 50–58.

that previously divided SOF and GPF forces.<sup>92</sup> The reconfiguration of these relationships from functional to more matrix-like has increased the Coalition's capacity to coordinate and process information, and has enabled U.S. forces to adapt more quickly to the uncertainty faced in this particular environment. For instance, Henry Mintzberg, an organizational design specialist, would likely attribute the early failures in Afghanistan to the improper configuration of forces, which caused a breakdown in the coordination between SOF and GPF.<sup>93</sup> Horizontal communication in the previous command structure only existed to the degree that SOF and GPF elements on their own made the effort to synchronize strategy and objectives between themselves. The lack of formal integration at every level otherwise helped prevent the force from achieving the U.S. government's overall political objectives; the military's ability to react to unexpected changes in the environment and overcome internal friction was simply too slow.

Two elements can be used to measure stability within the environment: certainty and complexity, with the amount of stability directly proportional to the amount of certainty an environment presents.<sup>94</sup> In other words, the more

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92 Richard Burton and Borge Obel, *Strategic Organizational Diagnosis and Design: Developing Theory for Application* (Norwell, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), 286.

An organization will take on one of three departmental shapes. Functional structures place employees together who perform similar functions or work processes or who bring similar knowledge and skills to bear. These structures have well-defined departments based on functional specialization, dominant information flows tend to follow the hierarchy (which bears the burden of coordination across functions), and they have a clear distinction between line and staff. Divisional structures organize people according to what the organization produces (products or organizational outputs); divided by geography, product, or customer. Relatively autonomous units manage their own business strategy, tactics and operations coordinated by a headquarters unit (product, customer, or geographical grouping...). Corporate headquarters allocates resources based on corporate strategy. Divisions may have any form or configuration. This is contrary to Daft's presentation. Organizational subunits based on a grouping of products, markets, or customers. Matrix structures are multi-focused. An organization embraces two structural grouping alternatives simultaneously. Dual chain simultaneously emphasizes function and product. There is typically a dual hierarchy (e.g., Function and projects) with increased lateral communication and mutual adjustment.

93 Henry Mintzberg, "Organization Design: Fashion or Fit?," in *Harvard Business Review*, (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Publishing, 1981).

94 There are two extremes within the spectrum of certainty ranging from stable to unstable. Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 50–54.

unstable the environment the more uncertain outcomes will be.<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, the number of interrelated problems in the task environment can range from simple to complex and, together, certainty and complexity provide theorists with a typology consisting of four quadrants (simple/stable, complex/stable, simple/unstable, and complex/unstable).<sup>96</sup> Mintzberg uses this typology to establish which organizational configuration is best for each environment. These include Machine Bureaucracy (simple/stable), Professional Bureaucracy (complex/stable), Simple Structure (simple/unstable), Adhocracy (complex/unstable), and Divisional.<sup>97</sup> Each of these configurations further consists of five component parts: the strategic apex (top management), operating core (workers), middle line (managers), technostructure (analysts and designers), and the support staff (services).<sup>98</sup> Boiling Mintzberg down and

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<sup>95</sup> Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 52–54.

<sup>96</sup> There are two extremes within the spectrum of complexity, from simple to complex. Daft, *Essentials of Organizational Theory and Design*, 52–54.

<sup>97</sup> The machine bureaucracy is dominated by its technostructure and ensures that there is a standardized work process. Operating in a simple and stable environment, this organizational form relies on a centralized form of management, and given its rather large size, has difficulty adjusting to changes in the environment.

The professional bureaucracy is dominated by the operating core, and relies on a standardization of skills for efficiency. Operating in a complex and stable environment, decentralized control ensures that flexibility can be achieved in addressing a wide range of problems. This organizational type has less difficulty in adjusting to changes in the environment, but still relies on a large yet specialized operating core.

The simple structure is dominated by the strategic apex, and relies on direct supervision by managers to ensure that outputs are successfully produced. Simple structures operate in simple and unstable environments, and their nature is inherently centralized. This organizational type is typically small, and can only react to limited problems, but will likely survive as the environment becomes more hostile.

Adhocracy refers to an extremely flexible organization dominated by its support staff, yet utilizes mutual adjustment to coordinate or synchronize outputs towards meeting common goals and objectives. Operating in a complex and unstable environment, the adhocracy's lack of formalization and decentralization enables it to adapt to significant changes in a complex environment. The adhocracy's small operating core is highly educated and specialized, and can provide the biggest return on investment when things become uncertain.

The divisional form is the largest of all structures. What further differentiates it is that it integrates multiple independent organizations with an overall command structure. The divisional structure is typically formed when product lines are diversified among each independent organization. The focus of control for this organizational type is middle line (management), and it requires a standardization of outputs to ensure success. Mintzberg, *Organization Design*, 5–12.

<sup>98</sup> Mintzberg, *Organization Design*, 3.

applying takeaways from his typology to the configuration of forces in Afghanistan, we can see why a hybrid configuration would be key for success.<sup>99</sup>

### C. ORGANIZATIONAL FIT IN IW

ISAF was created as an international civil and military Coalition in support of the GIRoA. Commanded by a U.S. four-star general, ISAF's structural design resembles that of a functional organization divided into three separate structures: IJC, National Training Mission (NTM), and a Special Operations Element (SOE).<sup>100</sup> The IJC, commanded by a three-star general, is the main operational element responsible for neutralizing the insurgency, and improving governance for all of Afghanistan.<sup>101</sup> The IJC closely resembles a divisional configuration (dominant midline and standardized outputs), and is divided into six different Regional Commands (North, West, South, Southwest, East, and Capital) each led by a two-star general.<sup>102</sup> A divisional structure enables the IJC to adapt in an unstable environment thanks to its decentralized decision making ability.<sup>103</sup> Each regional commander is responsible for developing his own strategy to satisfy the requirements and expectations specific to his environment.

As for SOF prior to 2010, the CJSOTF-A reported through a separate chain of command via CFSOCC-A, upward through Special Operations Command Central, and finally to the Central Command (CENTCOM)

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99 Mintzberg, *Organization Design*, 6.

A careful analysis of two very important aspects of ISAFs organizational structure should make this clear: 1) the focus of control, and 2) the coordinating mechanism.

The focus of control is what Mintzberg refers to as the one component of an organization that ensures success within a particular type of environment. It is dominant because it is where the focus of resources and effort should be placed. In parallel, the coordinating mechanism determines how each of the parts communicates to achieve the organization's overall goals for success. Mintzberg, *Organization Design*, 3–4.

100 ISAF Web page, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/news/5.html> (accessed August 15, 2011).

101 ISAF Web page, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/subordinate-commands/isaf-joint-command/index.php> (accessed August 15, 2011).

102 ISAF Web page, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/subordinate-commands/isaf-joint-command/index.php> (accessed August 15, 2011).

103 Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 106–135.

Commander. The separation between SOF and GPF caused friction, which in turn prevented the achievement of ISAF's political objectives. Yet, when both SOF and GPF were forced to adopt the same population-centric strategy under GEN McChrystal's direction, they had little choice but to strengthen their coordinating mechanisms and to synchronize their efforts. A new organizational structure emerged that placed CFSOCC-A and its subordinate commands under OPCON of ISAF. This helped to significantly reduce the problems created by separate stovepipes, and placed the CJSOTF-A squarely within ISAF's organizational boundaries.

When analyzed structurally, CJSOTF-A displays the characteristics of a divisional organization. Like the IJC, CJSOTF-A has regionally oriented task forces in direct support of the regional commands. Therefore, the dominant part of this organization is, again, the mid-line, which requires a standardization of outputs to ensure ISAF goals and objectives are met. CJSOTF-A maintains six subordinate commands with two lines of effort: FID and VSO. VSO, though not a new concept, has only been recently applied in Afghanistan, and is one of the approaches that has produced the outcomes (increased security and effective governance) that meet stakeholders' expectations. The outputs sought can be seen in what is known as "white space," whose expansion has required an increase in horizontal communication to ensure that all efforts are mutually supporting of the organization's overall goals (of more white space).

In all organizations, the degree of workflow between parts is determined by the extent to which departments depend on each other for resources and materials to accomplish their tasks.<sup>104</sup> The degree of connectedness, referred to as interdependence, can be broken down into a number of types.<sup>105</sup> Overall, ISAF requires a pooled interdependence to meet its objectives. Workflow is not

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104 James Thompson, *Organizations in Action*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), 51-82.

105 Types of interdependence include pooled, reciprocal, and sequential. Daft, *Organization Theory and Design*, 174-190.

required between units; it is instead sufficient for organizations to act independently on behalf of a common goal.<sup>106</sup> However, rules must exist to ensure that standardized outputs are achieved. Conversely, VSO depends on reciprocal interdependence, which requires a mutually supporting effort to accomplish goals and objectives.<sup>107</sup> The IWE demands this kind of interdependence since the output of one department directly influences the inputs of another in a reciprocal fashion.<sup>108</sup> Thanks to SOF's hybrid concept in VSO, a high degree of interconnectedness and coordination has resulted in a strategy that ensures a unity of effort, prompting further expansion.

#### **D. STRATEGY**

Prevailing organizational design theory leads to the determination that SOF Commanders and SOF units should be the lead in the IWE. However, at times in the IWE the force ratio required may be larger than the existing pool of SOF forces, and may lead policy makers to ask for more SOF. According to SOF Truth #3, "SOF cannot be mass-produced."<sup>109</sup> This is yet another argument for effectively integrating SOF and GPF capabilities to meet the challenges presented by a growing irregular environment. As has been written, "strategy is a plan for interacting with the competitive environment to achieve organizational goals."<sup>110</sup> However, adopting the wrong strategy can often produce undesired or even opposite outcomes, such as a larger insurgency. The transformation process in Afghanistan requires one of two military strategies: the direct or the

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106 Daft, *Organization Theory and Design*, 55–60.

107 Daft, *Organization Theory and Design*, 174–190.

108 Thompson, *Organizations in Action*, 50–52.

In IW, sequential interdependence is relatively incompatible. Sequential interdependence requires the outputs of one entity to become the input of another. Therefore, due to the asymmetric nature and complexity of IW, this type would be more suited for traditional tasks associated with machine or simple organizations. Daft, *Organizational Theory and Design*.

109 U.S. Army Special Operations Command, <http://www.soc.mil/USASOC%20Headquarters/SOF%20Truths.html>.

110 Richard L. Daft, *Organization Theory and Design: Tenth Edition*, (Mason: South-Western, Cengage Learning, 2010), 20.

indirect approach. The direct approach focuses on traditional measures of effectiveness, such as number of enemy killed or captured. The indirect approach focuses on irregular measures, such as gaining popular support enhancing security, and achieving effective governance. The effectiveness of indirect strategies can also be measured via numbers of civilian casualties, frequency of insurgent activities, and state/population freedom of maneuver.

In 2010, the CJSOTF-A, adapted itself to accomplish goals congruent with an indirect strategy. This called for a new hybrid organization. CJSOTF-A effectively integrated two infantry battalions, and augmented them with SOF operators. It thus became what Mintzberg might label a professional bureaucracy. The resulting VSTF then employed a number of VSPs throughout their assigned AORs to increase presence and expand their spheres of influence. VSPs operating under the VSTF hybrid organization proved capable of operating in a **complex stable** environment, and displayed many of the characteristics of a professional bureaucracy. They required an increase in specialized training for their operating core.<sup>111</sup> At the same time, Special Forces-pure VSPs commanded by SOTF commanders most resembled what Mintzberg calls a professional adhocracy. Not uncoincidentally, SOF structures are doctrinally configured to be capable of operating in the most **complex unstable** environments, environments not, as it happens, are best suited for professional adhocracies.<sup>112</sup>

One reason SOF's design—along with its personnel—are capable of rapid, innovative hybridization is because SOF's adaptable leaders know how to adopt strategies that will produce the desired outcomes and effects in a difficult IWE. This is what they train for. Doctrinally, the best COIN strategy focuses on utilizing local national forces to create security in support of a local/national government, allowing it to provide an output that satisfies the people. Previously in Afghanistan, the preponderance of GPF forces conducting COIN were

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111 Mintzberg, *Organization Design*, 3.

112 Mintzberg, *Organization Design*, 103.

organized, equipped, and trained to operate in traditional roles to achieve political ends militarily. In contrast, when SOF is placed in the lead, as VSO has recently demonstrated, more success is likely to be gained by working toward the same political and strategic ends, but in non-traditional, yet ultimately more efficient ways. These nontraditional ways do not just include most IW activities as defined by doctrine, but the recent integration of GPF has itself been made possible thanks to SOF's organizational flexibility.

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## VI. INTEGRATION

With the VSO program as an example and with SOF poised to become the lead and supported command in the IWE, it behooves the U.S. military to begin to conduct integration activities via training, education, and billeting. Being “in the lead” still requires that both SOF and GPF be able to work together as seamlessly as possible, one supporting the other. As humans we build bonds and relationships with others through sharing common interests and experiences. This is especially true of military members who share in experiences like combat and training. Military training usually involves a process that simulates the duties and responsibilities a service member will encounter during the execution of his daily tasks in both garrison and combat situations. Incorporating both GPF and SOF forces together in training environments should help establish these bonds and a common “language” prior to actual combat engagement.

### A. TRAINING

Strategy in war involves shaping operations that set the conditions necessary to accomplish the policy objectives of the National Security apparatus. SOF and GPF should begin training together *pre-crisis* to ensure the best possible results during actual engagements. To build a base level familiarity between GPF and SOF units, rotations could be established to integrate GPF units with SOF at training sites. It would take further study to determine the correct level(s) at which to conduct this integrated training, but the current modular deployment structure of the Army Brigade Combat team suggests it for a pilot effort given its inherent self-supporting capability, limiting the need for outside support.

Ideally, there might even be habitual rotations of identified GPF units with SOF to foster lasting relations between particular units. This type of habitual rotation could mirror relationships that currently exist between other SOF elements. At a minimum, units designated to deploy to an IW environment

together should conduct their pre-mission training in an integrated manner to ensure that the relationship can begin in a controlled training environment as opposed to a “live fire” real-world event.

Other synergies are also worth considering. For example, what about regional orientations? There are arguments both for and against giving active duty units regional responsibilities. The Army’s current modular force structure was established to allow all units to deploy in support of worldwide operations interchangeably, and tying them down to one specific region limits the tailorability of force package selection by the DoD. In other words, DoD-wide regional alignments do not meet the requirements set for flexibility spelled out in the 2010 National Security Strategy. However, instituting regional alignment similar to the SOF regional alignment would help overcome some of the noted capability gaps in areas such as language and cultural awareness that often hinder U.S. military success. Another option may be to align National Guard or Reserve units regionally, and in parallel with current SOF regional alignments. This may set the conditions for Joint and integrated GPF/SOF training on a more permanent basis. Of course, the disadvantage is that any training with National Guard or Reserve units would be limited at best since most of their personnel train only episodically during each fiscal year. Currently, SEAL Team 8 and 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A) are Africa oriented, but not restricted to DoD use only in Africa. Why not similarly consider an Africa oriented, but not Africa-only GPF Battalion, for instance?

## **B. EDUCATION**

The professional military education (PME) system should adopt a similar shaping strategy to set the conditions for successful Joint SOF-GPF operations in the IWE. SOF operators are the subject matter experts in IW operations because of their training and experiences. GPF are no less smart or capable, but their training regimen does not focus on SOF-specific IW tasks. Nor should it. In recognition that all future wars and conflicts will be engaged in in a joint manner, something must be done to ensure that GPF have a base knowledge of SOF and

IW operations. This is needed to ensure that GPF commanders and their staffs understand how GPF and SOF operations can be complementary.

An example of how this might work is the creation of a Special Warfare Captain's Career Course (SWCCC) at the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) that would train Special Forces Captain candidates on both SOF-specific planning and the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) in an IW environment. Officers from other branches of the U.S. Army considered integral in Joint and integrated operations could be selected to attend this course, thereby exposing them to basic tactical and operational level knowledge of IW operations, knowledge that they would be able to convey to their GPF commanders during future deployments when SOF is integrated with GPF in either the supported or supporting role.

Officers should be selected from the most likely branches to serve in a supporting role during SOF-led IW campaigns, such as the Infantry, Armor, Field Artillery, Aviation, and Military Police branches. These branches might be used to execute SOF-like, or SOF-advised and assisted missions such as those that are underway in Afghanistan with the VSO program. This course should be designed to allow these officers to attend the SWCCC in lieu of their parent branch's course much as cross-flow is already done between courses across different Army branches. The aim should be a thorough understanding of SOF support and command and control structures to ensure seamless integration during combined operations since fighting IW jointly is the next evolutionary step in how the U.S. military is likely to prosecute its wars. Currently there is no existing SWCCC. A detailed description of such a course can be found in the Appendix.<sup>113</sup>

Officers outside of the Maneuver Fires and Effects (MFE)<sup>114</sup> branches who serve in critical Operational Support (OS)<sup>115</sup> and Force Sustainment (FS)<sup>116</sup>

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113 See Appendix.

114 Maneuver Fires and Effects is a management division of the U.S. Army's Human Resource Command that encompasses the forces regarded as having direct effects on the enemy through their action.

branches, such as Military Intelligence, the Signal Corps, and the Logistics branch may be selected to attend a Joint IW Officer's Familiarization Course (JIWOFC). This JIWOFC would complement specific skills gained during the CCC by elaborating on the similarities, differences, and nuances to be found in Joint IW operations. These officers should be screened prior to actual selection in order to select those who show a proclivity for success in the IWE. While such individuals may not need to exhibit all of the physical traits of SOF operators, they should have the correct mental acumen and cultural awareness to ensure that they will be able to function well in an IWE.<sup>117</sup>

Integration should be undertaken in all phases of PME, not just at the company grade officer level. As with training, integration in education *prior* to real world application will be key to successful IW operations when SOF is in the lead. Similar programs for joint military education currently exist at NPS, for instance, at the field grade officer level through Joint PME (or JPME). The Defense Analysis department's curriculum focuses on irregular warfare studies at the graduate level. Most officers now attending JPME at NPS are SOF officers from all four services, as well as foreign national officers. Very few GPF officers attend this JPME program. An increase in the number of GPF slots would help create SOF-knowledgeable liaisons who can easily integrate back into the GPF because that is where they came from. These officers would be ideal candidates for serving as future operations officers and planners responsible for conducting most of the operational level planning in an IWE. In some instances, some of these officers will command at that operational level too.

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115 Operational Support is a management division of the U.S. Army's Human Resource Command that encompasses the personnel branches that provide direct support to the MFE branches to conduct their actions towards the enemy.

116 Force Sustainment is a management division of the U.S. Army's Human Resource Command that encompasses the personnel branches that provide administrative and logistical support to the MFE forces.

117 Regarding essential traits needed and who possesses them in order to conduct effective and efficient Irregular Warfare see theses by Brad Burris, *ARSOF Professional Military Education for the Future*. Master's thesis, June 2010, NPS, and Mike Mourouzis, *Finding Lawrence: Finding Talent for Unconventional Warfare*. Master's thesis, June 2011, NPS.

This kind of integration in education and training could continue upward through the War College for O-6s, and beyond. PME integration activities should also take place within the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) and the Warrant Officer Education System (WOES) to ensure integration across the entirety of the force. Education integration at all levels of PME will build relations and a common base of knowledge that will support SOF/GPF integration in all environments, not solely IW environments. The most important aspect of this integrated education will be establishing a system to track exactly who has completed these courses to ensure graduates are assigned to the correct duty stations to be utilized as GPF/SOF liaisons.

With a cadre of GPF officers at all levels who understand how SOF forces operate, as well as what they are organized, trained, and equipped to do, frictions should dissipate, animosities diminish, or, better yet, cease to exist entirely. Also, the choice of the right “tool” for the job will become much clearer to all involved. With the intent of building bridges rather than creating divides among DoD forces, more integrated education and training can only lead to more interoperability in a Joint irregular or conventional environment, and would short-circuit the need to overcome the learning curve that exists when trying to master areas of subject matter expertise that are already accounted for by another force.

### **C. SOF/GPF INTEGRATED BILLETS**

Typically, liaison positions between SOF and GPF elements are established at all levels within a JTF framework after a crisis has happened, and the force is deployed to respond. Given the education and training initiatives just described, it would only make sense to establish permanent SOF/GPF liaison billets throughout the existing force structure. LNOs would be integrated whether units are permanently assigned to work with one another, a cyclical rotation of units is established, or some other hybrid option is adopted as the most effective and efficient method to achieve pre-crisis SOF-GPF integration.

Special Operations Coordination Cells (SOCC) and General Purpose Force Coordination Cells (GPFCC) could likewise be created at the Division and

Corps levels to ensure further integration prior to the establishment of a JTF. These coordination cells would be able to facilitate training opportunities, stimulate joint integration during crisis planning, and deploy with the JTF as an immediate SOF/GPF LNO mechanism rather than after deployment, as is common today. Establishing/institutionalizing all of these pre-existing relationships would not only strengthen bonds between SOF and GPF, but also ensure that the JTF would be able to more rapidly establish an effective and efficient OODA loop<sup>118</sup> cycle, which would position it to stay well ahead of the enemy's actions/reactions as well, which should be the ultimate goal.

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<sup>118</sup> Colonel John Boyd. Observe Orient Decide Act (OODA) is a heuristic developed to allow a commander to understand the cyclical nature of the command and control process, the capabilities of his people, the role of information (good and bad), and the various ways commanders can control their subordinates more effective and efficiently than can the enemy commander.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Selecting the right individuals to lead our nation's forces in combat cannot always rely on a conveyor belt "next man up" type of approach. Selecting the most effective and efficient leaders requires selecting the correct leader for the type of conflict that you are engaged in.<sup>119</sup> By selecting the leader trained predominantly for the task at hand in the IWE, the U.S. military will eliminate the learning curve that has resulted from relying on predominantly GPF Commanders in *all* combat situations. Advocating for SOF to be in the lead is not an argument for SOF *only* in the IWE, but rather the JFC command to work with and through the local national forces, partner nations, and the GPF to create a synergistic and truly unified approach.

Organizational design theory asserts that the more complex and unstable an environment is the more flexible and adaptable the organization must be to frame the problem at hand and formulate a successful/winning strategy. "Complex and unstable" could not be better descriptives of the IWE. SOF is doctrinally organized as a professional adhocracy. According to accepted organizational design theory that makes it the most effective and efficient force for the IWE.

Some might argue that we can get it right with GPF in the lead, suggesting that we did so in Iraq from 2006-2008 during the surge.<sup>120</sup> For instance, COL Sean MacFarland<sup>121</sup> and COL H.R. McMaster<sup>122</sup> are described as having executed their campaigns during the surge in very unconventional ways, working

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<sup>119</sup> Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq*.

<sup>120</sup> Francis J. West, *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2008).

<sup>121</sup> Steven Clay, Interview with Colonel Sean MacFarland. Contemporary Operations Study Team, Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, January 17, 2008.

<sup>122</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2010), 60.

with and through the local nationals. Both are said to have come up with a new way to conduct irregular warfare.<sup>123</sup> It is important to note that they did not engage in these unconventional approaches during their first deployments into the Iraqi theater. While it is admirable that they adjusted their tactics over time, it appears that there was a learning curve associated with assigning units that were not trained for IW to take the lead in an IW theater. Meanwhile, the approaches MacFarland and McMaster adopted are not new at all to US Army Special Forces, which had been operating in this manner for decades, and in Iraq at least since 2004.<sup>124</sup> Again, the argument is that if SOF had been placed in the lead from the beginning there would not have needed to be such a lengthy discovery-learning period to figure out this “new” way of war. Instead, this approach could have been planned and executed from the outset. David Kilcullen has stated in an interview that it took the United States the historically standard period of time (3–4 years) to adapt its strategy in Iraq. He further explains that this is a very similar timeline to the U.S. in Vietnam and the British in Malaya, both wars led by GPF.<sup>125</sup>

In a resource-constrained environment, the United States will *not* be able to afford to waste blood and treasure like we did in Iraq. The learning curve must be flattened out to shorten the overall timeline. Yes, GPF eventually showed success in Iraq, but at what cost and for how long? Arguably, SOF provides a much larger return on investment for policy makers by being designed for the IWE, which by definition and not just design, makes it the most effective and efficient force to take the lead.

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<sup>123</sup> Geroge Packer, “The Lesson of Tal Afar: Is it Too Late for the Administration to Correct its Course in Iraq?,” *The New Yorker* (April 10, 2006).

[http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/04/10/060410fa\\_fact2](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/04/10/060410fa_fact2) (Accessed April 1, 1012).

<sup>124</sup> Brent W. Lindeman, “Better Lucky Than Good: A Theory of Unconventional Minds and the Power of “Who” (Master’s Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2009).

<sup>125</sup> Carlos Lozada, “A Conversation with David Kilcullen,” *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-yn/content/article/2009/03/19/AR2009031903038.html> (Accessed April 1, 2012).

The IWE presents tremendous challenges to the U.S. military as evidenced by the last 10 years of war in Afghanistan. SOF continually demonstrate their ability to operate in the complex and unstable IWE as proven by their development and execution of VSO that has consequently become the main effort of ISAF. Because SOF are uniquely suited to develop the unconventional solutions required for success in the IWE, they were able to create what former COMISAF, GEN Petraeus, deemed the potential “game changer” in Afghanistan, VSO. SOF thereby solidified the United States’ chances for at least tactical and operational success in Afghanistan.

GPF and SOF can support each other in both traditional and irregular ways when required. SOF will continue to support GPF in conventional warfare. Building upon the success of the VSO program, we may have the blueprint for future GPF/SOF integration in future large scale IW conflicts when we identify the IWE, and place IW thinkers in command from the outset. But this must be clearly defined in Joint IW doctrine as well as be laid out in future Quadrennial Defense Review preparations to ensure the United States does not find itself behind the power curve in future IW conflicts.

IW doctrine, still in its infancy, has a long way to go before it can take its place alongside better established and more mature doctrine. At the same time, as the war in Afghanistan wanes, and new economic and political realities intrude or compete for attention, progress in IW transformation will continue to require new and innovative solutions. SOF, as the lead for IW, would be well served by thinking hard with GPF about how to best integrate capabilities and personnel for IW environments. In keeping with SOF traditions, this would have the ultimate force multiplier effect.

By having a framework for selecting the correct forces and commanders for each type of environment, legislators can be sure to make the best use of critical resources. Once this is clearly defined in doctrine and, more importantly, directed by policy makers, the animosities, questions of campaign design, and

other stumbling blocks will be removed; the most effective and efficient strategy can then be selected. The nation's resources are limited, and becoming more limited almost daily. Getting the selection of who commands in the IWE right is critical to preserve both blood and treasure while moving forward towards success in future irregular conflicts.

Questions remain as to whether the current personnel management systems of the U.S. military can resource the needs of a SOF JFC. Further research is necessary to determine how to fill these command billets, and may also point to separate or at least vastly adjusted SOF Human Resource Management (HRM). Should each Service maintain control over its respective SOF HRM? Should SOCOM have greater control over SOF HRM? Is there some meet-in-the-middle solution that would work? These questions and many more will have to be answered. They may even necessitate another sweeping legislative reform such as the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

## APPENDIX

To fully understand how and why creation of a SWCCC might be the preferred choice for training IW-oriented Captains, it is important to understand how the system currently works, where it is flawed, and how this proposed fix would benefit SOF. Not only would it be a more effective and efficient way to create IW thinkers in SOF, but would create a cadre of IW liaisons within GPF force structures.

One might think that overseas contingency operations deployments would be keeping the Special Forces Qualification Course from meeting requirements for Special Forces Captains. But, in fact, the large bottleneck is a backlog of officers from multiple branches at the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC) at Fort Benning, GA. Officers from the Infantry, Armor, and Special Forces branches are required to complete this level of professional military education, and at times officers from other branches in the Army, as well as foreign national officers, also obtain seats in the limited capacity courses. These officers are selected to ensure that integration takes place, leading to success in the combined arms construct of land air battle doctrine that drives how DoD prosecutes war in a conventional environment.

An Army officer can apply for consideration to become a Special Forces Captain and detachment commander as soon as he becomes promotable to the rank of Captain, and is in the cohort year group (YG) to be considered by the ARSOF board. If he meets the requirements his packet will be accepted for consideration by this board. If selected by the board the officer must attend a nineteen day Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) to determine where he should be allowed to continue training in what is referred to at USAJFKSWCS, and among Green Berets, as the “SF Pipeline.” The pipeline encompasses all phases of the process of molding a Green Beret, from the ARSOF board until his arrival at his first Special Forces assignment.

Once selected at SFAS, an SF training pipeline officer candidate must attend the MCCC before he continues with training in the SFQC at Ft. Bragg. The MCCC is designed to train Infantry and Armor branch Captains to be company commanders. Since the SFODA is designed to train, advise, and assist up to a battalion of indigenous force soldiers in the execution of small unit tactics, it has been determined that this course offers the best basis for gaining the knowledge about how to plan and execute operations up to the brigade level. The MCCC is a six month long course, and due to the fact that it is located at Ft. Benning, GA, requires a permanent change of station (PCS) move on either end to get the Special Forces Captain candidate CCC qualified by Army standards. Altogether the process requires eight months total the PCS moves are taken into consideration.

The remainder of the SFQC is broken down into six phases as listed in Figure 1.

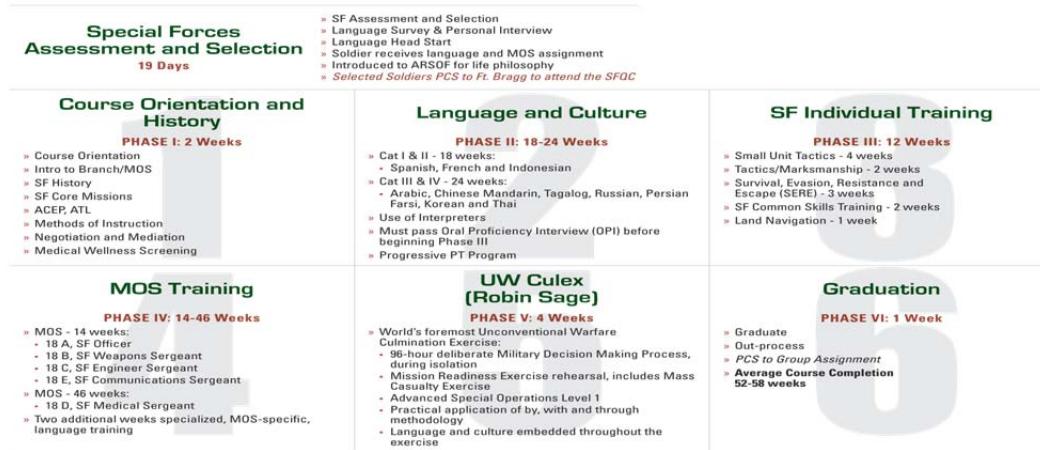


Figure 1. Special Forces Qualification Course Phases <sup>126</sup>

The average length of time it currently takes a Captain SF candidate to complete the SF training pipeline is 29 months. It is important to note that this is the average, meaning some candidates take much longer to complete the

<sup>126</sup> USAJFKSWCS graphic representation of SF Training Pipeline, current as of September 2010.

pipeline training, while others take less time. The USAJFKSWCS goal to meet demands by the SF Groups for SFODA commanders is 20 months.

The first period of lag time in training is between the ARSOF board and attendance at SFAS. This is due in part to deployment schedules and class size, but is manageable by enforcing the rule of requiring ARSOF candidates to attend SFAS within 12 months of the AROSF board releasing results to each cohort YG. The next and largest gap in training is the lag between SFAS and attendance of the MCCC. The Infantry and Armor proponencies “own” that school house, and also have a backlog of their own students thanks to brigade and battalion commanders keeping officers for combat rotations. SF Branch highlights the need for expedited attendance to these courses on their website.

Captains now pin on Major at nine years of Active Federal Commissioned Service. In order to complete the Special Forces Training Pipeline and complete the required twenty-four months of Detachment Command in order to fulfill the Key and Developmental requirement prior to the officer’s Primary Zone consideration for promotion to Major, ARSOF Candidates must attend the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course, and the Maneuver Captains Career Course at the first available opportunity following the ARSOF Board<sup>127</sup>

In order to meet promotion requirements established in DA Pam 600-3 these officers cannot afford to have delays as long as they currently are. This fact is illustrated in a Figure 2, and the preferred timeline is represented in Figure 3.

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<sup>127</sup> Retrieved from SF Branch Captains assignments link March 10, 2011:  
<https://www.hrcapps.army.mil/site/protect/branches/officer/MFE/SpecialForces/Accessions-and-Training.htm>

## **Year Group 2005 Special Forces Training Pipeline Average Timeline**

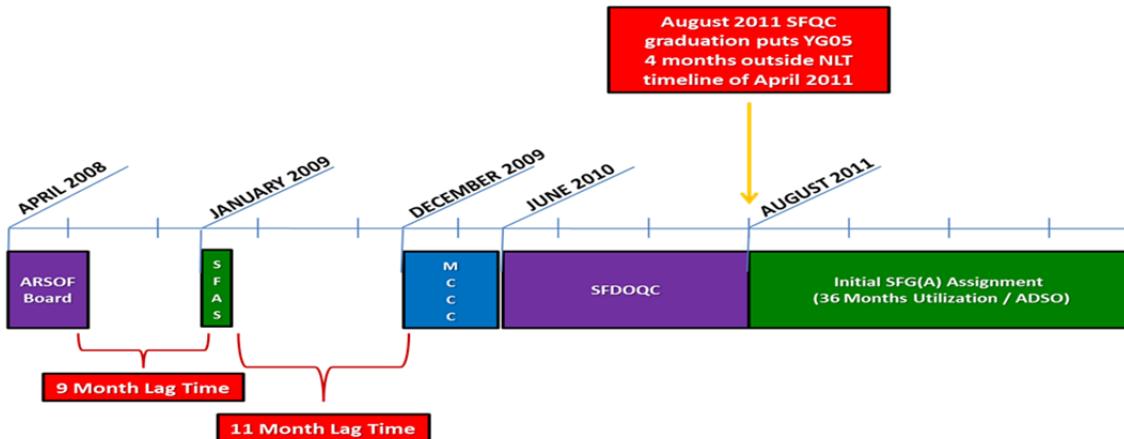


Figure 2. Year Group 2005 SF Training Pipeline Average Timeline.

## **Year Group 2007 Special Forces Training Pipeline Not Later Than Course Attendance Dates**

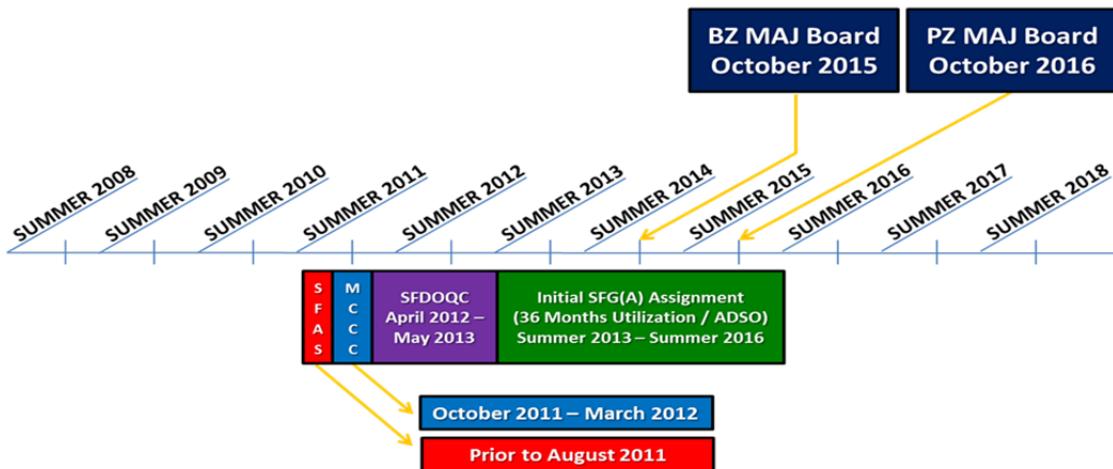


Figure 3. Year Group 2007 SF Training Pipeline Not Later Than Dates 128

These Figures use Cohort YG 2005 because the majority of SF Training Pipeline Captains due to graduate in fiscal year (FY) 2011 are from this cohort

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128 SF Branch graphic representations of current and desired SF CPT Training Pipeline timelines, current as of September 2010.

YG. As of September 2010 there were 302 total officers enrolled in the SF Captain Training Pipeline, 250 of whom had passed SFAS, and 144 of whom have graduated from the MCCC. The estimated time between the cohort YG 2007 officers ARSOF board results release and SFAS is nine months. The estimated time between SFAS and the MCCC is ten months. USASOC has 51 slots per MCCC class [46 for SF officer candidates, and 5 for Military Information Support Operations (MISO) and Civil Affairs (CA) officer candidates also selected by the ARSOF Board]. The U.S. Army Infantry School conducts six MCCC classes per FY. The average number of SF officer candidates who graduate the MCCC on time per year is 306. Due to the MCCC constraints from past years, the SF training Pipeline still has cohort YGs '04 and '05 officer candidates who need to attend, or are currently enrolled in the MCCC. Recent requirements for Infantry and Armor officers have prevented the ARSOF from receiving all 51 of its slots. This has created a backlog of approximately 35 SF officer candidates from cohort YG '06, which is the equivalent of two SF battalions worth of SFODA commanders.<sup>129</sup> The current status of each cohort YG's planned officer candidate attendance under the 51 slot model is depicted in Figure 4.

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<sup>129</sup> SF Branch presentation to Commander USAJFKSWCS concerning the backlog of the SF Captains Training Pipeline, current as of September 2010.

### **Special Forces Candidates Currently Scheduled for Future MCCC**

- Year Group 2004: 1 candidate
- Year Group 2005: 34 candidates
- Year Group 2006: 273 candidates

### **Current MCCC Attendance Plan For Year Groups 2004, 2005, and 2006 (51 Slot Model)**

- MCCC Class 10-001 (Fort Benning): 47 students (under planning quota by 1) (Class 10-001 quota: 48)
- MCCC Class 10-002 (Fort Knox): 15 students (under planning quota by 1)
- MCCC Class 10-002 (Fort Benning): 48 students (under planning quota by 3)
- MCCC Class 10-003 (Fort Knox): 17 students (exceeded quota by 1)
- MCCC Class 10-004 (Fort Knox): 16 students (met planning quota)
- MCCC Class 10-003 (Fort Benning): 51 students (met planning quota)
- MCCC Class 10-004 (Fort Benning): 51 students (met planning quota)
- MCCC Class 11-001 (Fort Benning): 51 students (met planning quota)
- MCCC Class 11-002 (Fort Benning): 12 students (quota will be met with Year Group 2007 officers)

Figure 4. Year Group 2004–2006 MCCC Attendance Plan<sup>130</sup>

The significance of this Figure is that if the SF training pipeline candidates were provided with 51 seats per MCCC class, cohort YGs '04–'06 would be MCCC-qualified by June 2011. Cohort YG '07 candidates would not be able to attend an MCCC class until January 2011. That class begins nine months after the FY 2010 ARSOF board released its results. This will be future compounded with the ensuing FY 2011 board and its group of SF training pipeline candidates. The FY 2010 candidates would be MCCC qualified by February 2012, again

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<sup>130</sup> SF Branch presentation to Commander USAJFKSWCS, September 2010.

assuming SF Branch is able to secure the 51 seats for each class, and also assuming that the historically predictable number of 200 candidates will not begin until 22 months after the release of their ARSOF board results. This would create an average of 27 months' time from ARSOF board to his first Group assignment for cohort YG '09–'12. But again, the SF Branch has not been able to secure the full 51 seats in well over three years.<sup>131</sup>

While there are some internal fixes that SF Branch, the USAJFKSWCS, and the Directorate of Special Operations Proponency (DSOP) can make to reduce this lag time, these fixes would only amount to band aids, and future backlogs will recur whenever the Infantry and Armor branches need to surge their officers through the MCCC to meet their own requirements. This cannot be held against them as they have mission requirements in support of Overseas Contingency Operations, and must stay poised to support any further worldwide crisis response, just like the SF Regiment. It is also their school.

SF Branch does contribute SF Majors to serve as small group instructors for the MCCC in exchange for the slots received, and it has offered more instructors to try and increase the total class capacity. However, the U.S. Army Infantry School does not have the physical space or logistical capacity to increase beyond its current student load now, or in the near future. With increasing budget cuts to the Department of Defense, it may even have to scale back. One long term fix would be the creation of a SWCCC to accomplish the goal of creating enough seats to meet the SF Regiment's SF captain requirements, and train a cadre of SOF liaisons within the GPF force structure to ensure seamless integration in both irregular and conventional environments. This would simultaneously reduce overall budget requirements for the Army due to the fact that SF training pipeline candidates would reduce their total number of PCS moves from three to two, and in some cases no PCS would be required at all. Currently an officer must PCS to Ft. Benning for the MCCC, graduate from the MCCC, and then PCS to Ft. Bragg, NC for the SFQC. Upon graduation from

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<sup>131</sup> SF Branch presentation to Commander USAJFKSWCS, September 2010.

the SFQC he must then PCS onward to his first SF assignment. The costs of this add up, especially when one considers the shipment of household goods, travel and lodging for the officer and his family, as well as per diem and MALT expenses. Even more important is the time lost. Each PCS can amount to as much as thirty days when the officer is neither training nor serving in an SF Captain assignment. In a best case scenario, for an officer stationed at Ft. Bragg, NC in a unit such as the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, or one of the many other units located there, with a follow-on assignment with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Group (also located at Ft. Bragg), no PCS would be required. Ultimately that would save the Army as much as \$75,000–\$100,000 per officer, and recoup as much as 120 days' lost time.

SWCCC would also enable DSOP to meet the Army requirement of producing CCC-qualified captains for the SFQC and SF Groups while simultaneously eliminating the ten months of lag time that currently exists for SF training pipeline candidates prior to the MCCC. SWCCC would focus on SF Captain-specific issues, concerns, and training needs, rather than relying on the “best fit we can find” from the MCCC. Additionally, this will return the two SF Majors used as instructors at the MCCC to the SF Regiment to meet other assignment requirements currently not being filled, while also restoring the Infantry and Armor branches their full MCCC class capacity for their full utilization

DoD believes it needs more SFODAs to meet the requirements for competent SOF worldwide. The SF Regiment does not currently have the ability to provide a commander for each of its SFODAs due to the expansion of the force, and the bottlenecks associated with both getting a SF training pipeline candidate to SFAS and through the MCCC to begin the SFQC. Close examination of these bottlenecks and gaps reveals that the current system will never be able to create enough supply to meet that demand. In order to fix this issue, and be able to maintain the proper rate of production over an extended period of time, SF should redress this in-house. An organization is better served with a solution over which they have ownership. Creation of a SWCCC may in

fact be the answer to owning the solution; it would break these log jams, and allow the SFQC to produce enough SF training pipeline candidates to supply the SF Groups' demand for competent Captains to command their SFODAs.

Further research into the program of instruction at the MCCC conducted by the U.S. Army Infantry School is required to ensure that the SWCCC meets the Army's requirements for CCC qualification under the policies and regulations set by Training and Doctrine Command. SWCCC should be co-located with DSOP and USAJFKSWCS at Ft. Bragg. SWCCC should also offer a complement of seats to GPF, as suggested within Chapter V, to meet the requirement to create GPF/SOF liaisons. GPF officers not further assigned to Ft. Bragg would still be required to PCS to their next assignments, just as they would from MCCC or other CCCs.

Given the U.S. deficit and the impending cuts in the DoD, DSOP cannot expect growth in class size or logistical capacity of the MCCC at Ft. Benning, GA. The USAJFKSWCS should therefore utilize its own space, and present a plan that shows how it can help reduce expenditures by reducing the number of PCS moves Captain candidates make. Using existing classroom space that belongs to the SOAF 18A MOS committee, along with its associated instructors would also minimize any incurred costs, while further shortening the overall training timeline.

By having SWCCC own the SF Regiment's course, and focus on IW leadership needs at the Captain level, it would not just meet the need of providing future SFODA commanders more expeditiously, but would create a cadre of IW liaisons who will know how to help SOF integrate GPF when SOF is the supported command in the IWE.

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